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WALTER DEANE

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*(With portrait)*

WITH the death of Walter Deane, a gracious figure passed from among New England botanists. Kindly, cordial, full of a perennially youthful and eager interest in all the doings of mankind, he possessed a loveliness which it is given to few of us to attain. Whatever his accomplishments otherwise were or might have been, it is the appealing personal quality of the man which inevitably comes first to mind as one thinks of him.

Deane was born in what his father called "a pretty little house" in Edinboro St., Boston, April 23, 1848, the son of Charles and Helen Elizabeth (Waterston) Deane, and the fourth of a family of six which remained unbroken by death until all were past seventy. On his father's side he came of old English stock; the original American ancestor, also Walter, was one of the first settlers of the town of Taunton, Massachusetts. The line was one of preachers and physicians. His mother was the daughter of Robert Waterston, a Scotchman who emigrated to Boston in the early years of the nineteenth century and set up there a successful importing business, in which Charles Deane later became a partner.

The elder Deane was a man of scholarly tastes who found time, in the midst of a busy merchant's life, to gather a distinguished library and to make himself an authority on the early history of the colonies in Virginia and Massachusetts. His numerous articles on various phases of that subject and his editions of such documents as Smith's "True Relation" (some of which he was among the first to show was



not so true) and Bradford's History of Plymouth Colony stand as models of exact, patient, cautious and understanding scholarship. Bowdoin College in 1871 and Harvard in 1886 recognized their worth with honorary degrees, conferred on their author.

It was, then, into an atmosphere of cultivation and intellectual activity, and of that patient investigation which is the foundation of all knowledge, that Walter was born. He came, also, into a Boston which, physically at least, has completely passed away. Edinboro St. is now in the Chinese quarter. Fort Hill, once high enough to have been chosen as the site of a battery to command the harbor, where later prosperous citizens lived in substantial houses with gardens, Grandfather Waterston among them, was long ago shovelled into the harbor; the streets of the wholesale district pass now without change of grade over the spot where it once stood.

About 1853 Charles Deane moved to Cambridge, living first on Fayette St. and then, from 1859 on, in a house which he built for himself at the upper end of Sparks St. It was in the taste of the time, high, square and mansard-roofed—a town house in type, but then almost in the country. From its site the fields stretched unbroken to Fresh Pond, then a famous botanizing ground; in other directions, too, much open space remained. Walter used to tell how, as a very small boy, he was nearly drowned in a brook near the present buildings of the Andover Theological Seminary. So much of nature near at hand made a good background for the development of an inborn taste for natural history.

One incident of his schooling he never forgot. He was inclined to be left-handed. An early teacher, observing him writing with his left hand, called him up to the desk, extracted therefrom a ruler of portentous size and weight and, fixing a stern eye upon him, exclaimed: "If I ever catch you writing with your left hand again, you'll get this"—and he illustrated with the ruler on his palm. The modern teacher, who would have to explain to the pupil how much more interesting and delightful it really would be to use the right hand, will regard this method with horror, perhaps not wholly unmixed with envy at its effectiveness. For young Walter returned trembling to his seat and from that day to the end of his life wrote—and he wrote much—wholly with his right hand.<sup>1</sup> Possibly some other things, of greater value, were fixed as firmly in his mind.

<sup>1</sup> Except once when for a few days it was disabled by a fall from his bicycle and he made shift, rather successfully, with his left.



He had the normal and wholesome youth of a well-disposed son of a good Boston family of the period—the Cambridge High School (in 1862), Harvard College, whence he graduated in the class of 1870, neighborhood parties, a place in the chorus of the Händel and Haydn Society (to whose concerts he used sometimes to escort a young lady who was to become Mrs. Charles William Eliot), a membership in the Hasty Pudding Club. A photograph taken for his class album shows a singularly attractive face, already expressive of those endearing traits, which, in later life, brought him so large a harvest of affection. For a year after graduation he did private tutoring, then found a position as teacher at St. Mark's School for boys at Southboro, Massachusetts.

St. Mark's seems to have been organized on a friendly basis—or Deane made it so in his own case. The relation between the young instructor and his boys was close; he has said that he both enjoyed and profited by it. Unhampered, in those days, by any rules of eligibility, he played on the school nine. He had so large a share in starting the student paper, *The Vindex*, that he is regarded as its founder. His photograph hangs in its editorial rooms; he had the pleasure of attending, by special invitation, the fiftieth anniversary of its birth.

One of the headmasters in 1871 was Rev. J. I. T. Coolidge. He was hospitably disposed toward the young teacher; an acquaintance begun in evenings at his house culminated in Deane's marriage with his daughter, Margaret Chapman Coolidge, in the school chapel, December, 31, 1878. Mrs. Deane was of old New England blood, a Channing on her mother's side. She was of unassuming, but individual and engaging personality. The marriage was between two people of like environment and upbringing; it proved as quietly happy as might have been expected.

After seven years at Southboro, Deane took another teaching position in the Hopkinson School on Beacon St. in Boston, then, and for long after, a well-known preparatory school for Harvard. He settled in Cambridge, where both his own and his wife's families were well represented. At first, the Deanes boarded. There was, however, on the Brewster estate off Brattle St., a large wooden building which the elder Brewster had had constructed to house the collection of birds belonging to his son William, already an ornithologist of distinction. But William had firmly refused to trust his birds to any



structure not fire-proof. The would-be museum served for a time as the scene of neighborhood dances; then, losing its vogue for that, stood unused. Deane suggested that it be made over into a block of houses, promising to be the first to rent one of them. Mr. Brewster liked the suggestion; the necessary alterations were made and Brewster St. opened to give access to the block. Thus Deane became possessed of the house which so many botanists have known and associated with him. He moved there in September, 1883, to begin an occupancy of forty-seven years.

Deane remained at the Hopkinson School until the fall of 1895, when a partial break-down in health caused him finally to give up teaching. "He was," writes one of his former pupils, "an admirable teacher of the persuasive rather than the forceful school. As I look back, I think he gave me perhaps as thorough a grounding in history as any teacher could have done . . . and a taste for the subject." His winning and friendly personality could hardly have failed to attract boys as well as men. Certainly his old pupils took away kindly and respectful memories of him and were glad when, in after years, the chances of life brought them into contact with him again.

One incident, though not directly connected with school and trivial in itself, may serve to illustrate his methods. For some years a valued member of the Deane household was a cat. In his old age, rather decrepit and perhaps too trusting, "Jack" was captured by some neighbors' boys, who, heedless of the red ribbon which proclaimed him someone's pet, carried him off and inserted him into an air-duct at their school. Their expectation that his entreaties to be let out would be carried, magnified, over the entire building by the ventilating system was very satisfactorily fulfilled until the janitor discovered the source of the disturbance and cast "Jack" out into the school yard, where he was killed by a passing dog. Deane, investigating the disappearance of the cat, found out the whole story and the identity of the kidnappers. It would have been easy and obvious to complain to teachers or parents; he did neither. Instead, he invited the boys to his house, received them graciously, led them with due seriousness and ceremony to his study, seated them there and told them the story of "Jack" and Mrs. Deane's grief at his loss. I believe he obtained an apology; there can be no doubt that the boys appreciated his dealing with them direct and liked him the better for it.

But, if his ways were gentle, he yet had learned in his own schooling



that there was such a thing as discipline; and he knew how and when to apply it. He had, too, a knack of so phrasing precept or reproof that his boys did not forget it. A little talk to some of his pupils, remembered and recorded by one of them years later, is illustrative of this. "I have noticed," he told them, "that when a hat falls on the coat-room floor, some boys will kick it, more pay no attention; about one in six will pick it up and put it on a hook. I want you to try to be the boy who picks up the hat."

For two years after leaving the Hopkinson School, Deane occupied himself with tutoring, leading small classes in botany organized for him by friends and, as a temporary member of the staff of the Metropolitan Park Commission, in compiling his well-known flora of the park system. This, after some preliminary work on the Commission's herbarium, he completed between December 5, 1895 and February 22, 1896, an excellent record for speed and accuracy combined.

In 1897, after some preliminary testing out of his capacity, Deane was invited by William Brewster to become curator of his ornithological museum; he accepted and served, organizing and cataloguing the collection and assisting in the preparation of Brewster's "Birds of the Cambridge Region," until 1907. Thereafter he had no professional occupation, but busied himself with his many avocations. His life had always been regular—the routine of school, with vacation visits to relatives or friends, or to summer resorts or places of botanical interest; in his later years it settled down to an unbroken series of winters in Cambridge and long summers in a rented cottage on the farm of his old friend Augustus Philbrook at Shelburne, New Hampshire, from which one looks out across the lovely Androscoggin valley to the flanks of the White Mountains and the sharp peaks of Mts. Jefferson and Adams just visible above the nearer hills. After Mrs. Deane's death in 1917, he was cared for with the devotion of a daughter and the discretion of a skilled nurse by Miss Lilla M. Brown, who, coming into the family about 1902 to care for Dr. and Mrs. Coolidge in their old age, remained through the second generation. It is a pleasure to think of him in these later years, in his house full of books, fine old prints and a thousand and one memorabilia of unexpected kind and interest, happily busy about this or that and dispensing an always cordial and thoughtful hospitality.

Outwardly, it was a quiet enough life; but within it was, for him, filled with variety and excitement. The world was so full of a number



of things, and he liked them all. He never lost the capacity for wonder. If he never travelled widely himself (Chicago and Virginia were the farthest limits of his journeys), he enjoyed almost as much the letters and messages and pictures from friends who did. He collected foreign views for the stereopticon and post-card pictures of the bridges of Paris—getting almost a thousand items in this not very promising field. At one time, he even practiced the Yankee art of whittling, producing a wooden chain of considerable length, with each link perfect and working freely in its fellows, and other like knick-knacks. He was, of course, a member, and to the end a faithful one, of the Nuttall Ornithological Club. He banded birds with enthusiasm. He liked astronomy; for years he kept a telescope at Shelburne and was ready to show and discourse upon to all comers the celestial phenomena it revealed. He collected insects for Mr. J. H. Emerton, a specialist on spiders, and for the Museum of Comparative Zoology. He was for forty-two years (1883–1925) secretary of the Old Cambridge Shakespeare Association and for all that time did much of the work of making up the numerous casts for the play-readings which accompanied each meeting. He used to say laughingly that after he retired it took a whole committee to do what he had been wont to do alone. The list of his interests and avocations might be extended almost indefinitely; but here we are chiefly concerned with his botanical activities.

“In the summer of 1880,” he wrote in a class report, “my interest in the study of botany was suddenly aroused by the analysis of the little Dalibarda (*Dalibarda repens*, L.), a plant common in our rich New England woods. From that instant every spare moment for many years has been devoted to the study and collection of the flowering plants and the higher flowerless or cryptogamous plants of the Northeastern United States.” In August, 1880, he pressed his first specimen, a *Gerardia*, still in his herbarium and annotated as having been determined by Dr. Gray as *G. purpurea*. His interest grew rapidly. Wherever he went he collected specimens, alone or in the congenial company of such kindred spirits as Judge J. R. Churchill and Dr. G. G. Kennedy. Almost from the first, he was no routine collector, content with a single specimen of a given species from a given locality. Whenever he could (as at his summer home at Shelburne) he secured a series to show the species from bud to fruit and to show range of variation. He went even further back, to the



seedling. His collection of these, showing the young plants from cotyledon to the third or fourth leaf, was perhaps unique when he began it and is still unusual. In the case of herbaceous species of tall growth he often prepared a series of numbered sheets showing a typical plant from root to tip. His specimens were always well chosen and prepared with skill and untiring patience—how untiring may be realized from his statement that he once untangled and secured, entire and unbroken, the fragile rootstock of an oak fern with fifteen branches, eight living fronds and a total length of eleven feet.

In addition to his own collecting, he bought and exchanged widely with other botanists. Many notable sets were thus acquired—Bebb's willows, Morong's *Najadaceae* (probably the best set except Morong's own), Bailey's and Olney's *Carices*, Small's and Heller's and Curtiss's collections from Pennsylvania and Virginia, Sandberg's from Minnesota, C. E. Lloyd's from Ohio, Bush's and Glatfelter's from Missouri, Lunell's from Dakota, and very full sets of duplicates from Churchill, C. F. Batchelder and other associates nearer home. For the most part, he limited his herbarium to the plants of the Gray's Manual region, but this limitation was by no means rigid. Plants from other parts of North America and European species which might be useful for comparison were not excluded.

Deane no doubt knew Dr. Gray socially before he became interested in botany. When he did and felt the need of expert aid in making determinations, having the fountain-head of botanical knowledge at hand, he naturally turned to it. He liked to tell how he would go over early to the Herbarium and spread out on a table the plants which needed attention; and how Dr. Gray would come in with his characteristic quick, tripping gait and after a cheery good-morning and a "Well, well, what have we here?", proceed to name the specimens at a speed which probably even the best of us would hesitate to attempt nowadays. On one occasion he said, "If you will take this to that young man at the table in the corner, he will attend to it for you." The young man was L. H. Bailey, and a life-long friendship began then and there.

In whatever he did, Deane made friends and kept them. It is doubtless too much to say that he never lost one except by death, but he cannot have lost many. Botany was no exception. His library contained a full set of author's copies of the works of one distinguished and prolific botanist; he stood godfather for the children of another;



still another named a son and a genus after him. Few taxonomists who visited Cambridge were allowed to miss at least a taste of his pleasant hospitality. Mrs. Deane seconded him faithfully, though she used sometimes humorously to complain that the miscellaneous botanists he brought home to luncheons and dinners were rather prone, when they descended from the herbarium room, to say "Ah, how do you do, Mrs. Deane?" and then, turning to Mr. Deane, "Now, as to that *Podophyllum peltatum*, I think . . .", and so on to the end of the meal. But she was hospitably ready for the next one.

These connections, begun in meetings at the Gray Herbarium and little visits at his house, but rarely stopping there, reacted on Deane's botanical work and especially show their results in his herbarium. He would have been the last to attempt establishing a friendship for what he could get out of it, but personal acquaintance and scientific service went, naturally, hand in hand. Each botanist who visited the Deanes, if he were working on any particular group, would examine and name Deane's material of that group. The advantage was mutual; the excellence of the specimens and the notable exsiccatae they included made them worth the specialist's while, and Deane acquired the expert and authentic determinations which any owner of a working herbarium wants. The result is an extraordinarily well documented collection; many of the sheets bear as many as half a dozen successive annotations by experts from Drs. Gray and Watson to the latest monographer.

It was not for nothing that Walter was the son of that patient investigator, Charles Deane. The father once in England spent weeks collating the manuscript of Bradford's History of Plymouth Colony that he might discover and correct any errors of detail in the transcript which he had used in his own edition of it. The son was equally particular with each detail of his herbarium. I have spoken of the thoroughness and skill of his collecting; they were carried on through the whole process of herbarium-making. For years he did all his mounting himself with exquisite care; later he had the expert assistance of Miss Anderson of the Gray Herbarium and one or two others. He loved to arrange and index and record. For months he set down in his journal the number of miles he rode on his bicycle each day; for years he entered two daily temperature-readings, daily or seasonal lists of plants and insects collected and birds seen and the number of sheets mounted at each sitting. When his herbarium



grew too large for any single room in his house and had to be distributed among several, he devised for it an elaborate topographical index which showed the exact location of each case and each genus in it. I am sure he used this index sometimes for the pure pleasure of it, when he could perfectly well have found needed specimens without it.

The result of all these tendencies, continued to the end, was an herbarium as notable in its way as his father's library. By 1895 it was already distinguished enough for a notice in *Science*. At his death it contained about 40,000 sheets in most excellent order, many of them, because of the annotations referred to, veritable historical documents. Probably no better personal collection was ever gotten together in the United States.

It is because the herbarium was so notable that I have dwelt on it so much; but it was, of course, by no means all of Deane's botanical activities. A teacher by profession and instinct, his impulse was to pass on his botanical knowledge as it was acquired and sufficiently digested. He soon began to produce a series of short articles published in the earlier volumes of the *Botanical Gazette*, the *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club*, the *Plant World*, etc. Later, he was a frequent contributor to *Rhodora*, beginning with the first number in 1899.

Like many competent amateurs, he was modest and hesitant in attempting original taxonomic work—a tendency intensified in him by a certain lack of self-confidence. He was content to leave the defining and describing of species to the professional. Also, of course, his work lay in a region the flora of which is comparatively well-known and which offers little opportunity for the finding of obvious novelties. The description of one new species, in collaboration with Dr. Robinson, and the naming of a few varieties and color-forms were, therefore, the sum of his strictly taxonomic achievement.

His published notes were, however, not of the trivial sort which merely pass on pleasantly, to those who like their knowledge pre-digested, what is already well-known. They were the literary result of his observant and original collecting; they deal with the methods thereof and with habits and parts of plants not noticed in current manuals of the time—such as the rhizome and fruit of the water-lily; the exact time needed for the opening of a bud of the evening primrose (10 seconds); the curious mechanism of seed-dispersal in *Oxalis montana*; the summer foliage of sweet grass (*Hierochloa*). He rarely attempted to draw deductions; but as records of observation his



notes are admirable. Forty of the descriptions of botanical tribes and genera in the Century Dictionary are his. His study of the gradual change in the salt-marsh vegetation on the banks of the Charles River in Cambridge after the building of the present Basin had cut them off from salt water, is wholly typical both of his quickness to perceive opportunities for original observation, of the thoroughness of that observation and of his tendency to limit himself to the organizing and recording of its results with little attempt to draw general conclusions.

In floristics his interest in details and his talent for arranging them had full play. His Flora of the Metropolitan Parks, an excellent piece of work, has already been mentioned. He contributed several of the earlier installments to the series of "Preliminary Lists of New England Plants" in Rhodora. He served through almost all the sixteen years' life of the committee which prepared the elaborately documented Flora of the Boston District, published in installments in Rhodora, and was one of the two members who remained to the end.

His many friendships caused him to be in demand as a writer of obituaries. For Gray, Watson, Bebb, Morong, Penhallow, Mrs. Owen and others he provided pleasantly written, sympathetic and appreciative memorials.

In endless other ways, he was helpful. He named and distributed sets of duplicates for friends who had less time for it than he. He assisted with the manuscript of Mrs. Owen's Flora of Nantucket, Rand and Redfield's of Mt. Desert and Pease's of Coös County, New Hampshire. He collected many specimens for many specialists.

It was inevitable that a man of Deane's cordial and amiable disposition should associate himself intimately with the other botanists, amateur and professional, of the Boston region. It was equally inevitable that when the New England Botanical Club was formed (Dec. 10, 1895) he should be one of the twelve charter members and one of the first Council. From that day until his death there was never a time when he did not hold some office in the Club. He served it as a member of committees, vice-president, president (1908-1911), curator and librarian. The last office came to him in celebration of his seventy-fifth birthday. The Club had gradually acquired a small collection of books and pamphlets relating to New England botany and useful in connection with its herbarium. They needed some care; it was felt that Deane could not be more fittingly honored than by



providing for them. A fund of about one thousand dollars was made up by contributions from members of the Club. It was presented with due ceremony, the income to be used primarily for maintaining and increasing the collection of books. The office of librarian was created and Deane chosen its first occupant. He served until two years before his death.

His unfailing interest in botany and his willingness to join in enterprises connected with it enlisted his aid for professional as well as amateur activities. In 1891 he was appointed to the Overseer's Committee to visit the Botanical Department of Harvard College, the other members then being F. H. Peabody and Walter Hunnewell. He served on this committee until 1896. From 1923 until it was merged in the general committee for botany in 1929, he was on the Visiting Committee for the Botanical Museum. He was much interested in the Ware collection of Blaschka glass models of plants and assisted in gathering material for Mr. Blaschka to copy.

His friendship—there is no other word for it—for the Gray Herbarium extended over nearly half a century. He was a frequent and welcome visitor there. In 1918 he presented to the Herbarium his entire collection of botanical pamphlets and clippings, some 2600 items in all; smaller gifts of money, literature and specimens and less tangible, but none the less real, kindnesses were scattered freely through the fifty years. In 1897, when the Visiting Committee for the Gray Herbarium was established, he was appointed a member and remained one, almost continuously, till his death. He had his part in the largest undertaking of the Herbarium in his time, the planning and construction of the present excellent building; to this enterprise he brought an infectious enthusiasm which not only inspired his own efforts but aroused and stimulated interest in others.

He is commemorated botanically by the genus *DEANEA* Coulter & Rose, a small group of Mexican *Umbelliferae*.<sup>1</sup>

Fittingly and mercifully, his last illness was gentle. There was little suffering; outwardly it seemed no more than a gradual cutting down of activity, a transition from chair to bed, from waking to the coma in which he quietly passed away on July 30, 1930. He was buried from the College Chapel. His will provided for the division of his

<sup>1</sup> I am much indebted, for their kindly interest and aid in the preparation of this paper, to Miss Mary Deane Dexter, Mr. Ruthven Deane, Dr. Benjamin L. Robinson and Mr. Roger L. Scaife.



herbarium between the New England Botanical Club and the Gray Herbarium, and for the gift of his botanical library and correspondence and his collection of portraits of botanists to the latter. There was a bequest of one thousand dollars to the Club and twenty thousand, plus the reversion of a trust fund on the death of the beneficiary, to the Herbarium. Thus he continued into the future his long service to both.

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## RECENT DISCOVERIES IN THE NEWFOUNDLAND FLORA

M. L. FERNALD

*(Continued from page 63)*

From Woody Point (PLATE 237) one looks back to the Canadian forest on the slope of Lookout Mountain and across to the alternately wooded and bare slopes on the opposite side of the Arm. Farther up the Arm, but standing some miles to the south, is The Tableland, a flat-topped and great, seemingly naked block of serpentine (2336 feet high), weathered pinkish- to yellowish-ochre and looking like a gigantic pale brick wall, only streaked down its side with lines of white snow-fields. Lesser rounded knobs lie between it and the "bottom" (we should say the head) of the Arm and, towering above them, like a small Matterhorn, rises the sharp pinnacle of the Peak of Teneriffe. That was our view upon landing and we were impatient to get everywhere at once.

Space will not permit a detailed account of the daily knee-jolting trips and the thousand-and-one incidents of our stay at Bonne Bay. We soon discovered that it was as little "worked out" as Bay of Islands, Old Port au Choix and the dozen other areas along the West and Northwest coast of Newfoundland visited by the party of 1925. Mr. Preble promptly adopted us; and with him in his motor boat, and with a liberal supply of his fresh fruits and cream and home-made cakes, cookies and pies, to say nothing of roast chickens, we spent every day possible, from early morning to late evening, exploring the Bay and its headlands and mountains. Off days there had to be when we were forced to stay indoors caring for the presses, drying our paper in intermittent patches of sunshine and (without openly admitting it) resting our muscles and joints after the difficult climbing. Two or three talus-slopes a day were as much as we could stand;